

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the title as follows:

**A RUBBER COMPOSITION FOR TIRE SIDEWALLS AND PNEUMATIC TIRES
USING THE SAME**

The Specification has been amended as follows:

On page 1 replace the paragraph commencing on line 2, with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention relates to a rubber composition used for a sidewall of an automobile tire and a pneumatic tire using the same.

On page 1 replace the paragraph commencing on line 4, with the following amended paragraph:

In order to reduce rolling resistance of a tire, a tire can be made lightweight. The conventional method for obtaining a lightweight tire is the method of reducing the amount of rubber that forms the tire. However, durability of ~~a~~-the tire is decreased by this method. Also, because a small amount of rubber is used, stiffness of the tire and steering stability tend to decrease. When the amount of the filler in a rubber composition is reduced, rolling resistance can be reduced, but reinforcement properties of the rubber decrease.

On page 1 replace the paragraph commencing on line 12, with the following amended paragraph:

It is known that both improvement in fatigue of the rubber and reduced heat generation can be obtained, when a thermoplastic elastomer or an olefin resin is compounded ~~to~~-with the rubber component as a reinforcing agent of fiber (see JP-A-7-309974, JP-A-7-309975). It is also known that rubber having high elasticity and high

stiffness can be obtained and destruction properties can be improved, by compounding with polyolefins such as polyethylene (see JP-A-9-272307, JP-A-10-315717,

JP-A-10-195249). However, in these methods, the kneading temperature of the rubber composition is high and exceeds the melting point of the polyolefin. As a result, dispersion of the compounded polyolefin is insufficient. Consequently, the steering stability is insufficient and a lightweight tire cannot be prepared. In addition, the polyolefin powder is poor in adhesion with the diene rubber ~~and~~ which is known to easily become the destruction point.

On page 2 replace the paragraph commencing on line 2, with the following amended paragraph:

Also, known is the method of burying a thermoplastic elastomer composition in a sidewall, in order to reduce the road noise of a tire (see JP-A-9-300921). However, according to this method, the rolling resistance cannot be reduced while maintaining the steering stability.

On page 2 replace the paragraph commencing on line 8, with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention aims to obtain a lightweight tire without decreasing durability ~~and to~~ while ~~reduce~~ reducing rolling resistance and ~~improve~~ improving steering stability of the tire.

On page 2 replace the paragraph commencing on line 11, with the following amended paragraph:

That is, the present invention relates to a rubber composition for a sidewall comprising 20 to 70 parts by weight of an inorganic filler, and 5 to 35 parts by weight of polypropylene powder, based on 100 parts by weight of a the rubber component, which satisfies the following equation:

On page 2 replace the paragraph commencing on line 25, with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention also relates to a pneumatic tire ~~comprising~~containing the rubber composition for a sidewall.

On page 3 replace the paragraph commencing on line 5, with the following amended paragraph:

The rubber composition for a sidewall of the present invention contains diene rubber such as natural rubber (NR), butadiene rubber (BR), isoprene rubber (IR), butyl rubber (IIR), halogenated butyl rubber, styrene-butadiene rubber (SBR) and nitrile butadiene rubber (NBR) as a rubber component. The amount of NR in 100 parts of the rubber component is preferably 30 to 100 parts by weight, more preferably 40 to 70 parts by weight. Also, as ~~a~~the rubber component other than NR, 0 to 70 parts by weight of at least one rubber selected from the group consisting of butadiene rubber, isoprene rubber, butyl rubber and halogenated butyl rubber is preferably ~~contained~~present. When the amount of the rubber component other NR is more than 70 parts by weight, processability and workability tend to decrease. The rubber component, which is at least one rubber selected from the group consisting of butadiene rubber, isoprene rubber, butyl rubber and halogenated butyl ~~rubbe~~, rubber is preferably contained in the rubber composition for a sidewall of the present invention, in view of the improvement in resistance to flex cracking and crack growth.

On page 3 replace the paragraph commencing on line 22, with the following amended paragraph:

The rubber composition for a sidewall of the present invention contains carbon black and/or silica as an inorganic filler. The kind of carbon black is not particularly limited and examples thereof are HAF, ISAF and SAF. Also, the kind of silica is not particularly limited and examples thereof are dry silica (silicic anhydride) and wet silica

(hydrous silica). The amount of carbon black and/or silica as the inorganic filler is 20 to 70 parts by weight, preferably 35 to 70 parts by weight, more preferably 40 to 60 parts by weight, based on 100 parts by weight of the rubber component. When the amount of carbon black and/or silica is less than 20 parts by weight, the reinforcement properties decrease significantly and when the amount is more than 70 parts by weight, the rolling resistance becomes poor, which is disadvantageous~~thus being unfavorable~~.

On page 4 replace the paragraph commencing on line 7, with the following amended paragraph:

The rubber composition for a sidewall of the present invention contains polypropylene (hereinafter referred to as PP) powder. The PP powder can be a powder obtained by drying after polymerization or by freezing and pulverizing the powder dried after polymerization. The process for preparing the PP powder is not particularly limited. The amount of the PP powder is 5 to 35 parts by weight, preferably 10 to 20 parts by weight, based on 100 parts by weight of the rubber component. When the amount of PP powder is less than 5 parts by weight, a lightweight tire cannot be achieved and steering stability cannot be improved. When the amount of PP powder is more than 35 parts by weight, the rubber becomes brittle and strength and durability decrease. The PP powder used in the present invention is powder having a small particle size. The particle size of the PP powder is preferably at most 500 .mu.m, more preferably 1 to 300 .mu.m, further preferably 1 to 100 .mu.m. When the particle size of the PP powder is more than 500 .mu.m, the PP powder does not disperse in the rubber and remains as foreign material, decreasing durability, thus being unfavorable. Also, from the viewpoint of high melting point and hardness, the PP powder preferably has high crystallinity.

On page 4 replace the paragraph commencing on line 26, with the following amended paragraph:

When mixing the PP powder with the rubber component, the kneading temperature is preferably 110 to 165.degree. C., more preferably 110 to 160.degree. C. When kneading is conducted at a temperature higher than 165.degree. C., the PP powder melts and phase conversion occurs. As a result, the rubber does not come together and sheet processability tends to decrease. When kneading is conducted at a temperature lower than 110.degree. C., kneading is often insufficient and the dispersion condition becomes poor, thus being ~~unfavorable~~ undesirable.

On page 6 replace the paragraph commencing on line 12, with the following amended paragraph:

The rubber composition of the present invention can be applied to all areas applications where a composition of high hardness is required, but is most effective as a sidewall composition for a tire, which is required to have properties such as high hardness and high stiffness in order to maintain durability.